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Front-Line Practitioners versus Received Theories of Crime and Terrorism

Abstract

This paper provides an analytical summary of the findings of a research project into the activities, the causes of, and responses to, organized crime and terrorism. Based on the views of front-line practitioners such as social workers, teachers, law enforcers and other experts, the paper examines their needs, interpretations, uncertainties and perspectives. It then compares these views with those emerging from previous analyses and research, highlighting the assonances and dissonances that typically crowd these areas of investigation.

Keywords

Organized crime, terrorist networks, drivers, institutional responses, prevention

Introduction

Practitioners dealing with organized crime and terrorist networks develop views around the activities and causes leading individuals to join such networks. They also evaluate the effectiveness of responses to these phenomena and, in a reflective fashion, the adequacy of the professional setting in which they operate. Causation aspects have been addressed by many criminological schools of thought, including positivism, functionalism, labeling, strain, conflict and control theory. These theories attempt to identify the drivers of both phenomena while hypothesizing the pathways of offenders into organized criminality and terror activities. The practitioners who acted as informants in this research drew on their own direct experience in dealing with both, highlighting the constraints, difficulties and misunderstandings hampering their routine work, but they also expressed views that find an echo in the criminological literature. As responses to organized crime and terrorism are inevitably linked to their perceived causes, informants in this research project also expressed views on the efficacy of existing legislation and the structural makeup of the organizations in which they worked. This paper examines such views in light of analyses and previous research conducted into organized crime and terrorism.

Due to its exploratory character, this research did not set off with precise initial hypotheses, rather it was designed with the awareness that views of organized crime and terrorism vary according to the social and professional position one occupies. Variations of views pertain to the causes of the phenomena observed, the range of harmful activities enacted, and the efficacy of preventive and repressive responses. The purpose of the research, therefore, was to draw a picture of how the views and operations of the different cohorts of informants were affected by the specific context in which they were positioned. Of particular interest for the research was to determine to what extent the views of criminal justice professionals and non-professionals differed, but also those of academic researchers and law enforcers.

Methodology

Using a mixed methodology that includes a quantitative empirical framework with qualitative inputs from interviews, focus groups and workshops, this research canvassed the views of key commentators in the field. The respondents were selected from law enforcement agencies, policy makers, the academic community, practitioners and other stakeholders in the area of prevention of organized crime and terrorism. A quantitative survey was conducted to engage front-line practitioners and professionals. Focus groups were then carried out with practitioner organizations working as law enforcement agents. Finally, workshops were conducted with solution providers, professionals and experts in the field of security.

All the different components of the research focused on the same topics, namely the causes, activities and responses to organised crime and terrorism. The findings were studied and evaluated in research consortium meetings and are interspersed in the narrative below, where the convergence with, and divergence from, findings produced by previous research are also noted.

In more detail, interviews were held with informants based in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK. On the institutional EU-level, 6 interviews with relevant experts were carried out. Few more interviews (3) were conducted with researchers established in the surveyed countries but whose expertise was not country focussed. They were experts on terrorism and organised crime in Europe in general. Among the interviewees, researchers constituted the highest number of responders (53 interviews, 47.3 %), followed by practitioners (24 interviews, 21.4 %), and policy-makers (13 interviews, 11.6 %). These latter served at the national level (members of national parliaments), while few of them operated at the local or international level. Responders labelled as practitioners often decided to hide their affiliation and name. Those who stated their affiliation had a variety of tasks: the sample included police officers, people working for NGOs, working in prisons, working on counter-terrorism or organised crime within administrations, as well as social workers working on prevention. Some responders were categorized with mixed-connotation labels (22 interviews, 19.6 %): these responders were experts in multiple fields of activities, thereby allowing interviewers to gain interesting insights into multifaceted perspectives on issues related to organised crime and/or terrorist networks.

An online survey gathered data on the practices and views of first-line professionals, who were directly or indirectly helping to address the causes or effects associated with terrorism and/or organised crime. Data collection for the survey took place from May 24 to September 16, 2017 by using the Qualtrics Online Survey tool. This survey targeted a niche pool of respondents rather than the general population, which explains the sample size of 519. Regarding the demographics, more than 65% of the respondents were male and a majority was between 30 to 40 years old. The survey covered a total of 23 countries, 15

different professions that fall into the category of first-line-practitioners and 12 different areas of work within these professions. The findings were generated via the use of SPSS software.

Eleven focus groups were organized in 8 countries across the European Union. The focus groups engaged 107 law enforcement agents and front line practitioner organizations working on organized crime or terrorist networks. Finally, workshops were organized with solution providers, professionals and experts in the field of security.

Focus groups were organised by individual partners involved in the project, who collectively agreed on the topics to be addressed. These included the use of cyber security tools, the investigation and prosecution of cyber crime, the impact of illegal migration, organised crime and terrorism in the prison environment, agency cooperation, prevention and community action.

The workshops took place in Darmstadt, Reggio Calabria, Barcelona and Brussels, involving some forty professionals. Each workshop aimed to highlight current challenges, available solutions as well as possible societal and ethical issues.

Workshops involved a total of 31 experts, contacted through public or private organisations. Participants in the workshops were researchers, advisors or solution providers in the areas of organised crime and terrorism. Among the topics addressed were, first, technical perspectives, with participants assessing the efficacy of their solutions; second, users' perspectives, with law enforcers evaluating the limitations of the tools at their disposal; and third, research perspectives, where researchers identified lacunae in their work and indicated potential directions for future investigations.

Findings

Organized crime activities

There was a sense that knowledge of the organized crime and terrorist phenomena is insufficient. This lack of knowledge was highlighted in the survey as well as in the qualitative research based on workshops, focus groups and interviews. Among the experts interviewed the point was made that more cooperation between researchers and practitioners, along with less emotional attitudes on the part of public bodies, would contribute to a better understanding of both phenomena. Those interviewed also stressed the importance of collaborating with external experts, particularly in the relatively 'unknown' area of cybercrime. Interviews, moreover, brought to the fore the need for an international platform for the exchange of information. The majority of respondents (60%), however, mentioned drug production/distribution and cybercrime, along with the smuggling of people, as the main activities of organized crime. In their view, these require more effective prevention or response policies and strategies. Only in a minority of national contexts was it felt that the activities of organized crime include forays into the licit world

thanks to the partnership with, and the support or tolerance of, official political representatives and/or legitimate entrepreneurs.

Two main points need to be highlighted here. First, the research process led to no distinction being made between professional and organized crime. The former is characterized by a horizontal structure in which agents operate as peers, planning schemes together, executing them, and sharing proceeds. By contrast, the latter implies a distinction between planning and execution, a wage relationship between a patron and an agent, and a degree of invisibility: agents may ignore the motivations and the very identity of those recruiting them (Arlacchi, 1994; Armao, 2000; Ruggiero, 2000; Dino, 2008). The activities mentioned by our informants, to be sure, may be carried out by both professional and organized criminals, but the emphasis was only posed on the latter. Second, the activities conducted by organized crime in the official arena, which concerned only few of the experts interviewed, were neglected by the majority of informants contacted through the quantitative as well as the qualitative research.

Previous research proved that organized criminal groups who gain access to the legitimate economy and the political apparatus complete the evolution hypothesized by Peterson (1991), whereby this type of crime traverses a number of successive stages: a predatory, a parasitic, and finally a symbiotic stage. While some groups may fail to undergo a similar evolution, thus stagnating in conventional criminal markets, others may instead succeed, therefore straddling legality and illegality.

By focusing on conventional criminal activities, many of our respondents overlooked the instances in which organized crime invests into the official economy, engages in the delivery of services and in the formation of partnerships with legitimate actors. Criminal networks, which facilitate such non-conventional activities, were also neglected (Dino and Ruggiero, 2012; Ruggiero, 2017).

In brief, informants focused their attention mainly on conventional criminal activities, namely organized groups that remain confined to illicit markets.

Organized crime drivers

‘Being raised in a criminal environment’ scored very high among our respondents (66%), whereas ‘Discriminatory police tactics against certain groups and individuals’ scored very low (7%). Families were regarded as part of such criminal environment. Some participants in the focus groups claimed that legal restrictions on police work was a problem for those involved in the investigation of human smuggling, a problem also encountered in the identification of criminals due to data protection laws. The analysis of our quantitative data also shows that joining organized crime networks was perceived less to do with mental difficulties and instability than with lack of opportunities (45%). It is interesting to locate the responses received in our survey within the traditional and contemporary debate around the causes of organized crime.

From the perspective of the Positivist School of criminology, the variable ‘tradition’ plays a crucial role (Lombroso, 1971). ‘A criminal environment’, and

'families' within it, return in subsequent interpretations in the form of 'backwardness' or 'archaism'. These are analyses that address organized crime from a 'cultural' perspective (among the most celebrated are Hess, 1973 and Hobsbawm, 1971). Belonging to the same cluster are contributions focusing on the perpetuation of organized forms of criminality, which is said to derive from the lack of popular stigma attached to those involved. Subcultural theorists, for instance, would argue that members of criminal organizations are not regarded as individuals belonging to a distant and censurable social universe, nor are they associated with immorality or elicit contempt (Cohen, 1955; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). Our respondents, by emphasizing the 'learning process' implied in being 'raised in a criminal environment', located their views in the tradition of subcultural theories.

Echoing strain theory, the relative majority of participants in the online survey singled out 'lack of opportunities' as a causation variable. Merton's (1968) deviant adaptation of the 'innovative' type comes to mind, namely a solution adopted by those who pursue the official goals of money and success through alternative illicit means. The quantitative parts of the research, on the other hand, failed to provide the nuanced descriptions found in the 'social disorganisation' tradition, that is to say descriptions of organized crime as micro-societies characterised by a surrogate social order (Downes and Rock, 1988; Thrasher, 1927; Shaw, 1930; Whyte, 1943; Landesco, 1969). While police discrimination against certain individuals and groups was deemed irrelevant by our respondents, some classical literature, instead, focuses on the participation of the police themselves in organised criminality (Landesco, 1969). Finally, the variable 'low self-control' (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990) did emerge in interviews and workshops, but notions of organised crime as service provider in contexts characterised by lack of trust were not (McIntosh, 1975; Gambetta, 1992; Varese, 2010; 2017).

Measures against organized crime

Respondents mainly opted for the creation of special police/law enforcement units (49%) and discarded the idea that new drug legislation would have an effect on the fight against organized crime (22%). Little attention was devoted to the potential of labour market reform and improved welfare provision (20%). The analysis of our quantitative data reveals that the policing and criminal justice group of our informants did not necessarily see harder tactics as effective prevention tools. Participants in focus groups stressed the importance of integrating young people and empowering them, namely making them able to express their opinions and reach independent decisions. More involvement of civil society was advocated, along with more material resources and training for law enforcers and investigators. Interviews with experts revealed unsatisfactory feelings around the problem of agency cooperation and transnational coordination of responses. They also emphasized how institutional responses are often driven by emergency situations and determined by the search for political consensus. Some interviewees stressed the importance, in the fight against organized crime, of establishing proper protection for whistleblowers. The analysis of quantitative data shows a prevalence of non-criminal justice professionals favouring human and social approaches to reduce the incidence of organized crime (44%). The analysis also reveals that aims and objectives in

combatting this type of crime are shared across occupational roles. Some law enforcers involved in focus groups lamented the inadequacy of cybercrime units and the need to liaise with the private sector, particularly commercial banks. Respondents involved in workshops stressed the need for strong coordination, communication and alignment of national and international laws that regulate the field of cyber-security. Interviewees pointed out the need for more strategic, comprehensive, prevention measures, but also for techniques able to evaluate the effectiveness of such measures.

For further analysis and as mentioned in the introduction, data was manipulated to collapse those participants working in criminal justice related fields (CJ professionals) and those working in other domains such as education and youth work (non-CJ professionals). Comparing criminal justice professionals to non-criminal justice professionals, we see a difference as to how they believe reductions in criminality could occur, in table 1.

Variables	CJ professionals %(n)	Non-CJ professionals %(n)	Significance
Social welfare	28 (63)	40 (36)	4.08*
Job creation	48 (61)	53 (87)	0.81, NS
Increased policing	28 (33)	31 (47)	0.33, NS
Sentence enhancement	34 (41)	38 (60)	0.60, NS
Increased therapy	24 (30)	35 (55)	4.0*

Note: (*) denotes significant association at the $p < 0.05$ level. The analysis illustrates those participants who responded to the question as either having a moderate or strong effect. The figures in parentheses indicate numbers of informants.

Table 1: Cross-tabulations of effect of actions for crime reduction across professional types

Two findings are worth attention. Firstly, in percentage, respondents within both groups did not differ substantially in how they saw job creation as a preventative measure. On the other hand, the relatively low score of 'increased policing' and 'sentence enhancement' may indicate that, perhaps inadvertently, informants applied an economic logic to prevention and prosecution, echoing classical studies such as Becker's on the optimal enforcement expenditure. This, in Becker (1968; 1976), is to be understood as the ideal amount of enforcement, which depends, among other things, on the cost of detection, apprehension, criminal conviction and punishment of offenders. Such cost should not exceed that incurred by society as a consequence of criminal activity.

Surprisingly, the policing and criminal justice group did not necessarily see harder tactics working in prevention and reduction. Interestingly, more human-centred approaches such as social welfare intervention, as well the enhancement of mental health and psychological services, did show a difference, with non-criminal justice professionals favouring them. Table 3 below explores an additional set of actions perceived as effective to reduce organized criminality.

Variables	CJ professionals %(n)	Non-CJ professionals %(n)	Significance
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Increased rehabilitation	33 (41)	38 (62)	0.77, NS
Special units	51 (63)	49 (80)	0.17, NS
Investments schools	37 (46)	43 (67)	0.88, NS
Legalise prostitution	18 (19)	18 (24)	0.02, NS
Legalise drugs	20 (31)	27 (36)	0.24, NS
Community policing	40 (50)	42 (67)	0.05, NS

Note: The analysis illustrates those participants who responded to the question as either having a moderate or strong effect.

Table 2: Cross-tabulations of effect of actions across reducing organized criminality

Table 2 above shows that there was no difference between the opinions of individuals within each professional category regarding the effects of each action aimed at curbing/reducing organized criminality. The percentages of each subsample, with the exception of the ‘creation of special policing units’, were all of moderate level, meaning that the majority of all participants, regardless of what they believed to be appropriate in tackling organized crime, thought that these factors will only partly influence crime reduction. A positive message to take away from this analysis is, again, the similar views of participants regardless of their social or professional role.

But let us provide a general backdrop against which the responses received might be better understood.

Backdrop

Informants, in sum, advocated a mixture of measures connoted by both a social and a technical character. Educational programmes aimed at spreading civic awareness were prioritized, as were projects promoting social inclusion. In line with anti-drug policies already operational across Europe, the majority of respondents called for tackling demand through informative public health campaigns and supply through international agency cooperation. Skepticism about the introduction of new legislation led to neglecting the potential effect of decriminalizing the use of some drugs. As already mentioned, little interest was also shown in social prevention based around labour market reform and improved welfare provision. By contrast, research conducted by institutional agencies (Europol, 2011) and independent investigators alike (Hobbs, 2013; Dino, 2016) depicts organized crime as ‘employer’ attracting individuals who find no suitable occupation in the official labour market. With legitimate occupations being increasingly characterized by precarious conditions and poor wages, organized crime may well appear as a more appealing labour recruiter. Social prevention, in this respect, should make legitimate work competitive, in ethical and material terms, with illicit activity.

Prioritizing, as most informants did, the use of special tools and units appears to be consistent with the common strategies already used by European governments, which consist of ‘dismantling criminal organizations by dismantling their leadership structures in order to fragment them into minor and more manageable groups’ (Ferreira, 2016: 43). Measures have included a mixture of undercover operations, raids, privacy-piercing approaches, and,

increasingly, collaboration with intelligence services and international policing agencies. Some observers would judge such strategies ineffective, particularly in developed countries, while in developing countries they risk, it is feared, to 'intensify pre-existing conflicts, turf wars, and generate smaller, less predictable and more violent groups fighting fiercely for smaller turfs' (ibid: 43). In brief, the old dilemma whether monopolistic organized crime causes more harm than disorganized crime remains unsolved (Andreano and Siegfried, 1980). For this reason, some academic researchers would suggest that efforts to eradicate organized crime should rely less on conventional crime-control activities than on the alteration of the incentive structures in place in the economic and the political sphere (Milhaupt and West, 2000). Hence the broad structural suggestions emanating from the European Parliament (2016): increasing public funding for schemes in underdeveloped regions, implementing economic growth strategies, enforcing and strengthening the regulations governing national and international financial institutions, prosecuting money-laundering enablers, developing international schemes of asset recovery, and harmonizing standards for confiscation.

It has to be noted, that while informants in this research also stressed the importance of patrimonial measures, they failed to appreciate the role that the allocation of funds to problematic regions could play. In fact, they called for more funds, resources and training to be allocated to law enforcers rather than to society at large.

As mentioned above, informants were perplexed about the way in which the effectiveness of strategies and measures can be assessed. Their perplexity may derive from the fact that strategies and measures mainly target closed enclaves of socially and culturally homogenous individuals, in other words they confine their intervention to conventional criminal activities, or the underworld, while overlooking the connections this establishes with the overworld. As already noted, only in reference to specific national contexts (for instance, Bulgaria), was the unwillingness of government to sever the links between organized crime and the official world pointed out.

It is difficult to explain the unsatisfactory feelings expressed by informants around the problem of agency cooperation and transnational coordination of responses. The Maastricht Treaty includes articles concerning police cooperation and addresses the growth of organized crime as a product of the process of integration. First regarded as an issue to be tackled under the Third Pillar (the intergovernmental pillar), the fight against organized crime gave rise to police and judicial cooperation and new systems and procedures to improve the sharing of information. In 1990, member states stipulated the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds of Crime, which was turned by the Council into a directive in 1991. Under the directive, states were forced to implement legislation against money laundering, 'but also to ensure that their financial institutions would register and report unusual and suspect transactions to the competent authorities (Fijnaut, 2015: 574).

Cooperation among member states stepped up in the aftermath of the assassination of Palermo investigative judges Falcone and Borsellino in 1992, and resulted in the establishment of Europol in 1995. European concerns around

organized crime were also intensified by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the threat of new forms of criminal activity emanating from its former satellite states in Eastern Europe (Dunn, 1996). An Action Plan to Combat Organized Crime was produced in 1997 under the banner of the Treaty of Amsterdam, instructing member states to integrate prevention, investigation and prosecution and harmonize their legislations. In a cumulative process, policies and strategies were devised under the successive presidencies of the European Council, and in 1999 Eurojust was created, namely a multinational European team of national prosecutors and police officers. A European Police College was funded while a Financial Intelligence Unit tasked with information sharing about money laundering was set up (Fijnaut, 2015). In brief, the unsatisfactory feelings conveyed by informants may testify to the difficulties member states encounter when they attempt to translate general principles and guidelines (or even instructions) into routine practical action. Or, as they argued, may derive from their perception that institutional responses are often driven by emergency situations and determined by the search for political consensus.

As for the technical measures advocated, increasing the quality of equipment and training of police forces scored high (about 40%). Support was given to the European Parliament suggestions to strengthen the regulations governing the activities of financial institutions and the prosecution of money-laundering enablers (see Directive 2014/42/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3). But along with the importance of patrimonial measures, the crucial role of special units for the fight of organized crime seemed to be prioritized.

Terrorist networks

Activities

In general terms, also in the area of terrorism more cooperation between researchers and practitioners was deemed necessary for a better understanding of the phenomenon. The highest number and proportion of respondents stressed that propaganda and recruitment require more effective prevention (12%). In the focus groups, however, it was argued that common definitions of violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism are needed, and that the emotional public reaction to such phenomena hampers their understanding. The analysis of our data shows a generalized concern among respondents about terrorism financing and cyber terrorism (10%). Some interviewees lamented that expertise in this area is underused by official agencies. One important finding was that the invasion of countries was not deemed to stop terrorism, but rather encourage it. It is interesting to compare this concern with research findings on this specific issue and other aspects of terrorism.

Working closely with Islamic fundamentalists, Sageman (2017) gained an intimate understanding of how propaganda and recruitment take place. He observed the development of networks transforming socially isolated individuals into warriors, and noted that affiliation is normally a bottom-up process, with young people volunteering to join the organization. Friendship and kinship bonds emerged as key factors in shaping the networks. In brief, propaganda and recruitment, the concerns of our informants, occur through micro-social dynamics which are little known to law enforcement and, therefore, can hardly be influenced by outsiders.

The necessity to clarify definitions is perceived in the existing literature as it was by the majority of our respondents. However, the emotional public reaction to terrorism, regarded by respondents as detrimental, seems to be perfectly understandable when targeting preferences are examined. Research conducted on this aspect reveals that soft targets are 'dominant and increasing, while particularly well-protected targets are almost totally avoided' (Hemmingby, 2017: 25). In other words, the general public is more exposed than high-ranking individuals or highly symbolic buildings or premises such as parliaments, governmental institutions or business headquarters.

The point was made by the relative majority of informants (12%) that the invasion of a country may be followed by organized violent resistance, and that invasions may destabilize regimes and trigger sectarian attacks. The example of Libya was referred to (Ismael and Ismael, 2013), while research suggests that over thirty per cent of the founders of ISIS were former members of the Ba'athist secret services of Iraq, who enact a form of revenge, responding with indiscriminate attacks to the invasion of their country (Gerges, 2015; Lynch, 2015).

Terrorist drivers

In the opinion of the majority of respondents (60%), individuals join terrorist networks because they are raised in a culture that promotes extreme ideological views. Psychological-personality disorders, in their view, have a moderate influence (42%). In the focus groups some participants underlined the exclusion of young people joining terrorist networks and their search for stability when joining them. The stress was also on vulnerability and lack of guidance and security on the part of families. A strong association between economic exclusion, isolation and alienation was found in our data analysis (53%), which also showed the respondents' emphasis on the influence of leadership figures (52%).

Cultures promoting extreme ideological views have been studied by scholars who have attempted to find in sacred texts the cause of contemporary terrorism. (Kennedy, 2016; Small, 2016; Adonis, 2016). Challenging causations derived from foundational texts, other scholars have underlined how the Quran is replete with suggestions around dialogue, peace and the development of harmonious interfaith relationships (Horkuc, 2009; Wills, 2016). Finally, the argument has been made that not Islam, but religion in general has always played a role in war and terrorist violence, even in advanced secular countries (Buc, 2015; Sacks, 2015; Hassner, 2016).

Research into psychological factors has linked terrorism with collective animosity against injustice and power. The final step on a narrowing staircase (Moghaddam, 2005), the choice of terror is said to appeal individuals who believe they have no voice in society and who express a 'significance quest' (Victoroff and Kruglanski et al, 2009). One of the causes identified in the literature is the feeling of 'weakness, irrelevance, marginalization and subordination experienced by Muslim people', combined with the memory of the glorious past of a great transnational civilization (Toscano, 2016: 123). The 'reactionary utopia' of the Caliphate is explained in these terms, namely as the result of frustration determined by the gap between expectations and

achievement. The frustration thesis seems to apply to both prevailing models of terrorism: 'the fanatic who is outside any appeal to rationality, and the calculating actor who lacks any capacity for human empathy' (McDonald, 2013: 11).

On the other hand, research has also examined terrorism as a corollary of social exclusion: extremists are said to come from the poorest and rundown parts of cities, where youth are raised in large housing estates and where trouble flares up periodically. Accounts illustrate the fractured lives of young second-generation migrants, their alienation, exclusion, family size, poverty and disrupted upbringings. Some traverse the pathways from home to care and from crime to prison, struggle within the education system, and display all the 'predictors of criminal behaviour' (Walklate and Mythen, 2016: 337). However, 'It is erroneous to presume that material deprivation works in a simple and/or straightforward manner in relation to the propensity to commit violence' (ibid: 338). To claim that inequality and social injustice are the main causes of terrorism neglects the fact that there is no terrorism in the fifty countries listed by the United Nations as the poorest, least developed, most unjust and unequal. As Sen (2015: 165) has argued,

'The simple thesis linking poverty with violence is empirically much too crude, both because the linkage of poverty and crime is far from universally observed, and because there are other social factors... Calcutta is not only one of the poorest cities in India – and indeed in the world – it so happens that it also has a very low crime rate' (ibid: 165).

In sum, our respondents overstressed social and structural factors as causes of terrorism, although they also highlighted the 'search for stability' that encourages young people to join terrorist networks. Their views on cultures promoting violence find controversial treatment in research, while findings in the psychological domain may suggest that more attention to this area of investigation should be devoted.

Measures to decrease terrorism

The majority of respondents thought that cross-border cooperation between police and intelligence agencies to facilitate monitoring, arrest and disruption would have the strongest effect (52%), and that military action abroad to target terrorist leaders and infrastructure has no effect. Pre-emptive intelligence was called for, mainly in interviews and workshops. Opinions collected in focus groups addressed the issue of legal documentation for young migrants who otherwise 'get lost in the system'. New comers, it was stressed, should receive appropriate support and guidance. Social workers, it was noted, needed to be properly trained in order to 'connect' with young people at risk. Often, their lack of religiosity was regarded as an obstacle preventing such connection. Other actors to be involved in the preventative process, it was remarked, include community leaders, religious leaders, victims and families. One problem raised during the course of interviews with experts was that preventative and other measures are commonly the result of mere public pressure. Preventative work should also take place in prison institutions, it was remarked. Interviews stressed, at the same time, that policy-making processes should be evidence-based and that a wider involvement of Muslim communities is necessary.

As in the previous section on organized crime, an analysis was undertaken to explore whether there were any significant differences between professional role and belief in specific preventative actions. Table 3 speaks to each of these, and refers to the sample as a whole.

Variables	CJ professionals %(n)	Non-CJ professionals %(n)	Significance
Equipment	42 (25)	48 (41)	0.61, NS
Social welfare	21 (12)	43 (32)	6.48**
Job creation	33 (19)	36 (29)	0.06, NS
Increased policing	33 (20)	35 (27)	0.50, NS
Special police	53 (32)	49 (41)	0.21, NS
Increased therapy	34 (19)	33 (26)	0.02, NS

Note: (**) denotes significant association at the $p < 0.01$ level. The analysis illustrates those participants who responded to the question as either having a moderate or strong effect.

Table 3. Cross-tabulations of effect of actions across professional types

None of the statistical tests undertaken (exploring the difference in beliefs around the reduction of terrorist activities or participation) were significant, with the exception of 'social welfare' approaches. Here, non-CJ professionals were twice more likely to believe that such approaches could work. Do note, however, that regardless of this, most of subsamples were below a majority (with the exception of CJ professionals seeing a moderate to strong effect in the inclusion of special police or units). This may demonstrate reluctance in the existing methods to curb contemporary terrorism in Europe. Of note is also the fact that the non-CJ professionals saw significantly more than their CJ counterparts the importance of work by civil society and the third sector in dealing with violent extremism and terrorism.

Table 4 provides additional information on potential actions that participants believed would reduce involvement in terrorist activities.

Variables	CJ professionals %(n)	Non-CJ professionals %(n)	Significance
Cross-border cooperation	62 (37)	53 (45)	1.09, NS
Improving community	32 (18)	33 (27)	0.03, NS
Border control	41 (24)	42 (34)	0.02, NS

Military intervention	37 (20)	51 (39)	2.60*
Community policing	47 (27)	43 (55)	0.21, NS
Reform education	36 (20)	31 (26)	0.44, NS

Note: (*) denotes significant association at the $p < 0.05$ level. The analysis illustrates those participants who responded to the question as either having a moderate or strong effect.

Table 4. Cross-tabulations of effect of actions across professional types

It should be noted that non-CJ professionals scored higher than their CJ professionals not only (as one would expect) in respect of community-focused measures, but only with regard to border control and cross-border cooperation. Note also their high preference for community policing.

Let us interrogate research and other sources on these points.

Official agencies seem to share the view that cross-border coordination has a strong effect. In this respect, an Agenda on Security for the period 2015-2020 was set out by the European Commission, detailing the concrete tools to be used in joint anti-terrorist work (European Commission, 2015). Technical anti-terrorist preventative measures adopted within the EU include exchange of DNA data, which is also carried out in the fight against other forms of cross-border crime (Santos and Machado, 2016), along with the introduction of new counter-terrorism legislation in most member states. Glorification and incitement are now widely criminalized.

As for military intervention, most available literature oscillates between suggestions to deal with terrorism through the rule of law and deprecation for unnecessary military action. While EU citizens overwhelmingly believe that institutional action against terrorism and radicalization is insufficient (European Parliament, 2016), states reacting with pure military force are said to imitate the illusions and delusions of those groups or individuals they are trying to combat (English, 2016). The dangers of what is termed a 'forever war' are highlighted: 'Say the word "war" and the rule of law often implodes' (Rakoff, 2016: 80). This is the view, among others, of distinguished law experts, who find themselves in disagreement when the judiciary avoids to scrutinize anything 'embarrassing' from far-reaching surveillance to torture or the use of drones (Todorov, 2014; Fiss, 2016). Equal controversy surrounds the use of 'disposition matrix' or 'kill lists' that spell out who has to be hit by a long-distance unmanned missile (Hayden, 2016).

In the UK, a study has examined the emotional impact of counter-terrorist strategies on Muslim communities, while several authors have focused on how such strategies increase fear and encourage suspicion and racism (Mythen and Walklate, 2006; Ahmed, 2015; Abbas and Awan, 2015). Finally, counter-terrorist wars have also been judged as serious obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian aid (Gill, 2016). It should be added that, when there is a disconnect between the depiction of terrorist threat as presented by official agencies and the perception of large sectors of the public, responses to terror attacks fail to gain the support they would need (Smith et al, 2016). The disconnect is likely to widen, at least in the UK, after the publication of the Chilcot Report, showing the disastrous outcome of the institutional deceit leading to the invasion of Iraq (Chilcot, 2016; Wheatcroft, 2016).

Informants did not specify the type of pre-emptive intelligence measures they advocated, nor did they seem to be aware of the considerable controversies surrounding them. For instance, some schemes have been located within the 'pre-crime' strategies adopted in many western countries. These strategies are said to centre state action on sheer suspicion, whereby individuals and groups are targeted without a specific charge being formulated. Anticipating risk, in this sense, tends to integrate national security into criminal justice, to the detriment of civil and political rights (McCulloch and Pickering, 2009). Anti-terrorism, from this perspective, is said to become a threat to democracy (Wolfendale, 2007; Zedner, 2000).

In the available literature, scant attention is devoted to the importance, as underlined in interviews, of the religiosity of social workers, whereas some research findings are available on issues around prevention of radicalization in prison and in the financial arena, where terrorist organizations find resources to support their propaganda, attacks and the reproduction of their own networks (Hamm, 2007; 2013).

Examples of community involvement as proposed by informants are relatively common across Europe. For example, prevention is pursued through targeting families, both those affected by the radicalization of one or more of their members and those who feel the need to protect their offspring from the radicalization process. In the UK, FAST (Families Against Stress & Trauma) is one such initiative, engaged in making people aware of the risks of the Internet and their exposure to violent messages. Although more controversial, the 'Prevent' programme, launched in the UK in 2003 as one of the four elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy, is inspired by similar aims, mobilizing in particular teachers and lecturers in the detection of embryonic signs of radicalization.

'Agenfor Media' is also engaged in preventing radical escalation, and produces videos and printed documents. These explain how to deal with vulnerable groups and individuals of Muslim faith from an Islamic perspective. The area of radicalization in prison is covered, while an informative social media channel is provided dealing with wars and insurgents in several regions. (<http://www.agenformedia.com/dossier/preventing-radical-escalations>).

Community-led (or social media) initiatives also take the form of testimonies and life stories of individuals affected by radicalization aiming to reduce the appeal of terrorist organizations.

The 'Viennese Network Deradicalization and Prevention' is active in the Austrian capital and operates in the field of education. The network elaborates and assesses policies and strategies, addresses social inequality and vulnerable groups, focusing, among other things, on gender and sexism. In Spain, 'Women without Borders' address mothers in the attempt to raise their awareness of extremist ideologies, aiming at the creation of a future without fear and violence.

Finally, some research proves that certain forms of community policing can promote Muslims' willingness to cooperate with investigators in terrorist prevention. While intrusive counterterrorism policies and practices alienate the communities being addressed, perceptions of police legitimacy and fair policing appear to have a strong bearing on Muslims' behaviour. Cooperation with the

police, in such cases, takes place despite 'the salience of identity within the current political discourse about terrorism and Islam' (Madon, Murphy and Cherney, 2017: 1144).

Our respondents proposed measures that share some components with these initiatives. For instance, when advocating the legal documentation and identification of young migrants (lest they 'get lost in the system'), support was given to control systems based on community forms of policing. These would encourage the willingness of ordinary people and groups to cooperate in the preventive process, favouring at the same time the provision of support and guidance to youth. Included in similar social initiatives, were actors such as social workers, community leaders, religious leaders, victims and families, namely all figures, professional or not, involved in the projects described above.

Analyses of the unintended consequences of policy interventions and strategic tactics suggest that 'sometimes these interventions have created backlash effects that led to greater numbers of crimes' (Chermak, Freilich and Caspi, 2010: 139). As an alternative, participation of extremists (or those they purportedly represent) in policymaking is advocated (Dugan and Young, 2010: 164).

In sum, the majority of our respondents concurred that military action abroad has no effect, although details regarding the backlash of such action were not captured in the research process. Similarly, cross-border cooperation between police and intelligence agencies was advocated, but the danger of adopting a pre-crime strategy and targeting individuals and groups on mere suspicion was not reckoned with. In other words, no potential unintended consequences of increased 'monitoring, arrest and disruption' were anticipated.

Conclusion

This research confirmed, to some extent, that views of organized crime and terrorism vary according to the social and professional position one occupies. Differences emerged with regard to the causes and the activities of both phenomena, but also with respect to the efficacy of preventive and repressive responses to them.

Organized crime

In the quantitative survey, a high concern was expressed for organized crime activities such as drug production and distribution and cybercrime. Participants in the qualitative strands of the research concurred, although they tended to emphasize the general lack of knowledge and the ineffective flow of information characterizing the issue. Drug crime and cybercrime, it was felt, require robust responses and strategies in terms of both prevention and repression.

Very few respondents, mainly participants in the qualitative research groups, identified organized criminal networks that had made their way into the licit economy/political apparatus. In brief, with few exceptions, they neglected the operations conducted by criminal organizations in the legitimate world.

Informants involved in this research study made no distinction between professional and organized crime and mainly limited their attention to the activities carried out by the former in criminal markets.

Views of the drivers attracting new recruits into the sphere of organized crime revolved around family background, in the quantitative as well as the qualitative segments of the research. Socio-economic status was deemed to exert a powerful influence on the choice to join organized criminal activity. The respondents' views, in other words, echoed learning and subcultural theories, but also concepts propounded by the Chicago School of Sociology, such as 'social disorganization', which is said to allow the flourishing of illicit activities.

One major commonality between our respondents' views and existing sociological and criminological theories was that involvement in organized crime signals a 'deficit', namely a lack of socialization, legitimate opportunities, or the absence of 'guardians', that is effective law and order forces.

The main dissonance between their views and those found in the criminological literature were manifest in the role they attributed to law enforcers and in the lack of appreciation of the surrogate social order, governance or trust provided by organized crime.

In response to organized crime, most respondents advocated the enhancement of police activities and technical measures, rather than the improvement of the social and economic conditions leading to illegal behaviour. In this sense, they expressed confidence in the effectiveness of measures that are already encouraged or implemented at the European level.

Terrorism

The expansion of terrorist networks was strongly imputed to successful propaganda and recruitment, with both being identified as priorities for investigation and law enforcement. In this respect, a mismatch was noted with previous theoretical and empirical work.

As for the main cause leading to involvement in terrorist activities, this was associated with cultures that promote extreme ideological views. A strong association with socio-economic conditions was also recorded, counter to existing literature which, instead, underplays this aspect. Individual pathology was, consequently, largely discounted as one of the etiological sources of terrorist recruitment. The greatest danger of terrorism in modern Europe, it was felt, comes from Islamic fundamentalist extremists, and their theocratic regressive yearnings was said to spring from the perceived injustices they suffer.

Responses to terrorist activity through the invasion of countries were criticized, thus echoing views widely expressed in the extant literature. Respondents believed that the best way to weaken terrorist networks was to promote cross-border police co-operation. In the qualitative strand of the research the need to involve Muslim communities in preventative projects was highlighted.

Two main strategic approaches were identified in respect of responses. Governmental 'technical' measures, or 'hard' military responses, on the one hand, and 'soft' educational programmes to be conducted in 'at risk'

communities, on the other. Our respondents stressed the importance of both approaches.

Interestingly, in both areas addressed (organized crime and terrorism) the responses advocated proved to be very similar to those already discussed and valued in the literature and, in part, to those already implemented across Europe. This would prove that the process some informants hoped for, which should bring researchers and practitioners closer together is, if only partly, already underway.

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